

Fairfax Center Phase II Working Group

Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2015

Attendance

Working Group: Chris Grisafe, Vincent Picciano, Robbie Stark, Jeff Saxe, Sherry Fisher

Staff: Kim Rybold (DPZ), Ken Sorenson (DPZ), Meghan Van Dam (DPZ)

Introduction

Vincent Picciano, Vice-Chairman of the Fairfax Center Area Phase II Working Group, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. He referenced the minutes that were distributed to the Working Group prior to the meeting and asked if there were any comments or corrections. Chris Grisafe made a motion to approve the minutes, and Robbie Stark seconded the motion. The Working Group approved the minutes 3-0, with Jeff Saxe abstaining (Sherry Fisher not yet present).

Scenario Development Presentations: PA 2014-III-FC2 and Submission SS4

Kim Rybold provided an overview of the presentations, which are both within the core focus area as determined by the Working Group. She also noted that these presentations were meant to be informational in nature, and the group should keep these ideas in mind when thinking about other areas within the core that might warrant land use changes.

PA 2014-III-FC2: Fairfax Towne Center

Ken Sorenson provided an overview of the subject property, noting that the intensity of existing development on the property is a .27 FAR, and the Plan recommendation at the overlay level is office mixed use up to .45 FAR.

Jeff Saxe noted that this proposed change was authorized as a separate, Board-authorized Plan amendment, and that it has previously been presented to the Springfield District Land Use Committee.

Sara Mariska of Walsh Colucci briefed the group on the proposed Plan amendment. She noted that she is representing DDR, which owns the shopping center. She indicated that this was previously authorized as a Plan amendment by the Board of Supervisors, and that the goal is to use this planning exercise to help gain a better understanding of the future when DDR is negotiating leases with tenants.

Sarah provided a summary of what is currently existing, currently planned/approved, and proposed concepts. She noted that there is currently an approval for a residential building with ground floor retail in the western portion of the site. The proposed Plan amendment would retain the existing retail uses and cinema, construct the approved residential building, and construct additional density comprised of a mix of retail, residential, office, and/or hotel uses that would be determined based

upon market demand, up to an intensity of 1.2 FAR. The highest intensity is a longer-term vision that may take 15-20 years to realize.

Ken Sorenson presented some considerations related to the proposed Plan amendment. These included the relationship of the site to transit, tapering of intensity, connectivity with surrounding area, and what kind of environment the mix of uses would create.

Chris Grisafe asked how the intensity would evolve over time. Sara Mariska stated that the evolution would depend on individual leases with the businesses that are there.

Vince Picciano asked about parking, and if this would be emulating development like Fairfax Corner. He also suggested there should be outdoor plaza space similar to Fairfax Corner.

Chris Grisafe asked if the ultimate vision was mostly residential, and if the ultimate vision was tied to transit. Does she see this kind of mixed-use development as a trend with shopping centers? Sara Mariska responded this is becoming more common, and that they would like to preserve flexibility on the mix of uses for the future vision.

Vince Picciano asked how close additional development is to the existing residential to the west. Sara Mariska responded that it is about 35-40 feet to the property line, and that they would be sensitive to the proximity of the residential use.

Jeff Saxe asked if the tenant leases, as of now, would allow the property owner to do any additional development. Sara Mariska stated that some, but not all, tenants have a right of refusal.

Chris Grisafe commented that the current Plan recommendation serves as a taper, and that at a 1.2 FAR this property would no longer serve as a taper. If this is not integrated within the examination of the rest of the core, it could be disruptive to the overall Plan.

Jeff Saxe asked about the progress of the traffic study. Meghan Van Dam stated that the scenarios provided by the property owner do not reach a 1.2 FAR, and that staff continues to work with the property owner to finalize scenarios to test.

The Working Group agreed that an intensity of 1.2 FAR on this site seemed to be too high given the location of this site within the core. An increase in intensity could be appropriate in the future, but there is not certainty as to what the mix or level should be.

Submission SS4

Elizabeth Baker from Walsh Colucci gave a brief presentation on the submission related to the Centrepointhe Church. The proposed Plan change would add an option at the overlay level for residential use at an intensity of 2.5 FAR. This would facilitate redevelopment of the church for multifamily residential use, in a style comparable to the Gables at Centrepointhe apartments. Presently, the overlay level recommends office use at an intensity up to 1.0 FAR.

Kim Rybold presented some considerations for this proposed change to the Plan recommendation for this site. Relative to the future transit station location, this property is outside of the quarter mile radius where the most intense development would be expected. The intensity of 2.5 FAR is twice the intensity of anything presently planned in the area. As such, it may be desirable to connect this level of intensity to the funding of transit.

Chris Grisafe asked if there were other examples of development this intense in the county. Kim Rybold noted that this intensity is more common in transit station areas. Elizabeth Baker stated that their plan would not be workable if the intensity is tied to transit.

Jeff Saxe asked if a Plan change such as this really needs to wait for the policy discussion within this study. He suggested making a motion for the Working Group to recommend that these submissions be reviewed separately from the study, in a manner like a Board-authorized Plan amendment, to enable the proposed development to move forward. The ensuing discussion considered what impact that might have on the committee's plans for the area. Staff advised that an impact study would need to be conducted, and pointed out that both plans feed into similar roadways and that their impact to other facilities, such as schools and parks, should be treated holistically. Jeff Saxe stated that since there were a number of Working Group members missing that evening, he would not make a motion at this time.

Vince Picciano stated that this site would be ideal for transit-oriented development and creating additional connectivity in the area. Chris Grisafe noted that the intensity proposed seemed like an outlier compared with everything else, much like the previous Plan amendment. He suggested that the group might be in a better place to evaluate these intensities in a couple of months after talking about the rest of the core.

Scenario Development – Working Group Discussion

Kim Rybold asked the group to consider what the area should look like in the future, so that they may start to think about potential land use numbers for the committee to consider at the next meeting. She presented some concepts from the previous Fair Oaks Mall Plan amendment, as well as the approved Plan for Fairfax Corner, to give the group an idea of what has already been considered in this area. She opened up the discussion to the group to identify any other portions of the core focus area where land use changes should be considered.

Vince Picciano stated that if Metrorail is extended, there will be more pressure for intensity in the core. Robbie Stark noted that more residential density may be desired, but not everything in the area will redevelop.

The group agreed that the core should not be another Tysons Corner. The group agreed on looking into the following properties:

- Increase in FAR on the outparcels surrounding the Fair Oaks Mall, in line with current Plan recommendations.

- Additional intensity on the county-owned parking lot adjacent to Fairfax Corner and the planned Metrorail station. This could be something similar to the Comstock project at the Wiehle Avenue Metrorail station.
- Additional intensity at the Fair Lakes Promenade, perhaps consider a .75 FAR with mixed residential/retail in Sub-unit I5. This could potentially be as high as a 1.0 FAR.
- Additional intensity on the Government Center parking lot, perhaps government/office buildings.
- Review the Centrepointhe Church proposal in Sub-unit J3

Sherry Fisher added that it would be desirable to look at how other uses like schools or recreation facilities could fit in. She also noted that the Government Center is often used for parking by the surrounding communities, and that not every surface lot should be converted to a garage. Chris Grisafe echoed the desire to ensure that there is enough parking with any new development.

The group expressed a desire to hear more about the Fair Oaks Church submission, as it is located adjacent to the core focus area. Kim Rybold stated that staff can invite them to present at the next Working Group meeting, where the group will follow-up on this discussion about potential land use scenarios to test.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.